



Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds
San Wong, Director

ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans

Minutes

2nd Quarter Meeting

November 17, 2016

Evelyn K Davis Center for Working Families

801 University Avenue

Des Moines, Iowa 50314

Call to order:

1:12 pm by Chair Rudison

Welcome Introductions:

Present: Clair Rudison, Mike Hulme

Teleconference: Rita Davenport, Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, Kenneth Morris, Lynn Sutton

Absent: San Wong, Miranda Mathis

Staff: Monica Stone, Kim Cheeks

Approve Minutes of September 23, 2016:

Motion made by Hulme to approve minutes, second by Morris, approved unanimously.

Financial Report:

The Dep't of Human Rights Board approved the status quo budget for the department reported by Stone. They will be presenting the budget to the Governor on Nov. 29 and when his recommendations are public they will be sent to commissions. Not many updates since last meeting.

Davenport noted typo on the FY17 budget breakdown sheet for Status of African Americans – General Fund Salary and Fringe sub-total should be \$114,753 not \$124,753. Stone acknowledged and will correct the error.

Public Comment:

Veola Perry, community member

Perry had a question about the budget and how the allocations were determined?

Stone, explained, each office has different staffing levels, one office may have one staff person where others have two or three. Most of the allocations cover salaries and fringe benefits, plus some of

division administrators' salary. Office of Persons with Disabilities has more staff, which includes Deaf Services where they may need other services such as interpretation. Offices also may have staff who've been employed with the state longer, whose salaries and benefits are higher.

Perry followed up with after salaries and fringes are deducted what is able to be accomplished with such small budgets?

Stone, very little money goes to programs, most of work done is in community, technical assistance, serving on advisory boards, etc.

Community Concern:

Rudison, in Baba-Singhri absence, explained the situation with 14 year old young man who was shot, in that the family is having issues with housing. They went to Des Moines Housing Authority, where an administrator refused to speak with them. They are receiving subsidized housing and they wouldn't work with them. Rudison feels services should be rendered to persons who live in the state and or city. He wanted to bring to the commissions attention and suggests constructing a communication to the city of Des Moines the family's concerns.

Sutton, explained she is working with similar incidents in Dubuque. Stated HUD is a federally funded program, if city turns them away they are in violation of HUD code. Suggests the family should report to HUD.

Rudison, commented he would like to report to the federal agency, and commission set up meeting to speak to city of Des Moines.

Hulme, said he needed clarity, in order to proceed.

The commission decided to wait until further explanation from commissioner Baba-Singhri.

Reports:

Director

No report.

Division:

In preparation for the upcoming legislative session, Stone will be conducting a training session for Latino Affairs Commission; understanding the legislative process, bill tracking, etc. The training will be held on Nov. 30th from 9am-2pm, at the State Capitol in the Legislative Dining Room. All commissioners are invited to attend. Also if ICSAA wants to get together she can sit down with the commission to talk about the process and hold a training as well. She also gave some open dates.

Perry commented she is interested in training and concerned about "Suck it up buttercup" bill. Wanted to know since Latino Affairs specifically asked, will Stone tailor training for African Americans? She would like the commission to provide for public so that community members can feel comfortable in going to the capitol to talk to legislators about issues and concerns and know the process.

Hulme motioned ICSAA hold a legislative training on December 7th from 6:00-8:00 pm, 2nd by Rudison, approved unanimously.

Dr. Baba-Singhri entered meeting via phone at 1:55 pm.

He explained he met with the concerned family two weeks ago, how they were concerned with current living conditions, and went to housing authority. They told him about the incident with the housing agency. He said he will meet with the family again to get further details so that the commission can decide how to move forward.

Dr Baba-Singhri disconnected due to scheduled class.

Office:

Written report submitted. Cheeks highlighted some events attended in the last quarter.

Commissioners:

Morris - not much change from last report. Shooting of an African American male stopped by the police in Cedar Rapids has mobilized the community to meet with the city and police department. The shooting resulted in him being injured and paralyzed from neck down, so the community is asking for video footage and demanding answers.

Sutton – continues working on housing initiative – where reports have been made to HUD and more people are filing complaints, happening weekly. Police have been shot at in Dubuque, where they are lured to locations where there are no cameras. There have been numerous complaints about these officers and nothing has been done. Feels the shooting were warnings. Health issues – city representatives concerned about opiate use and initiatives are being worked on. Commented on Cedar Rapids incident – the footage is public record and suggested they need to go to city and ask to work on it together to come to a resolve.

Davenport – will submit written report – higher education, and predatory lending issues are being worked on. Some of the loan places have gone out of business. She will look more into students in Iowa and why they are not finishing programs. She will shift her focus more on that issue.

Hulme – attended Iowa Summit on Justice and Disparities. He recently vacationed in Montana with his brother who is an investigator with Public Defenders office. They went to a conference on family law. Montana's minority population much like Iowa, is very small, focused on how Dep't. of Human Services is extreme in taking children from birth parents, and placing in unfamiliar family settings, and excluding consequences of removing child from birth parents. He talked about his experience in being a foster parent and adopting. Brother also has adopted infants of mixed races. In his current position, has seen women incarcerated give away parental rights, and the difficulty of getting their children back, after getting help and are good people. Feels we have gone overboard in removing children from birth parents.

Rudison – talked about experience in being a foster and adoptive parent. No matter how much you try and instill your values, the children are like their parents innately. He would try and keep his adopted children in contact with their parents as much as possible.

Rudison noted he will submit a report – that will include community collaborations and criminal justice work. He attended an ACES seminar, and reported Broadlawns opening mental health services to community – clinic opened in collaborative with Urban Dreams. Iowa Legal Aid working on opening Expungement Clinics possibly at United Way. He completed 7 week series – Building stronger African American families. He is one of the certified trainers from EKDC. He is working with Joshua Barr and Marvin Dejean – and 30 other African American men to create a strategy to combat disparities in Des Moines. Also is finishing up his dissertation for PhD program.

Old Business:

Dep't of Human Rights Board update:

Rudison reported - new member on the board.

2016-17 Policy Agenda:

Cheeks reported changes to the date from 2015 to 2016-17 since 2016 is almost over.

Legislative Priorities

Rudison, concern about the disproportionate number of African Americans incarcerated.

New Business:

None

Next Meeting Date:

Cheeks will send dates to commissioners to set next date. Stone noted the DHR Legislative Breakfast on the Hill will be Feb. 23, 2017 where commissions can meet in the same day.

Adjourn

Motion by to adjourn by Rudison, second by Hulme, approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 3:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Cheeks

